

**MANITOWOC COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Manitowoc County Human Services Department Board met at 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, March 25, 2021 in open session at the Manitowoc County Human Services Department, 801 Jay Street, Manitowoc, WI. The meeting was also accessible electronically by Zoom.

Board Members Present: Henrickson, Agnew, Baumann, Burke, Cavanaugh, Nasep, Shimulunas

Board Members Attending by Zoom: Ruggirello, Williams

Board Members Excused:

Board Members Absent:

County Board Members Present: None

County Staff Present: Ader, L. Fure, Randolph, Kubec, Dodge, Ziegelbauer

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CAVANAUGH, SECONDED BY BAUMANN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

EDUCATION TOPIC: Child Protective Services Prevention Information – Susan Ader

Sue Ader is one of the two supervisors of the Child Protective Services Unit. She supervises 8 primary social workers that go out and respond to referrals, 1 access worker and 1 LTE who has been extremely helpful. Since the pandemic some other counties have had the numbers of referrals go down but we only had April of last year with lower numbers, the rest have been steady.

When a referral comes in, workers do an assessment of the family and try to address issues to keep families intact. If there are lower level concerns or neglect we are doing more prevention. We are assigning a Parent Support Worker who works on a parenting program with them to address concerns and hopefully don't have to open the family for services. They are really engaging with their families trying to keep kids in their homes.

The Families First program is an initiative from the state to allow for more prevention services to keep kids in their homes and prevent future abuse. We also receive TSSF grant funds to work on prevention initiatives with families. There are a lot of conditions to meet to use the funds but they are very helpful. Workers can use funds to pay for day care, medications or other temporary items to help the family. It has been nice for staff to be able to work on some prevention items and when we are trying to engage with families they view us as more of a helping hand rather than wanting to remove their children. It has also helped with employee morale, when workers have a little balance between more serious cases, removing children and doing some prevention work.

The most prevalent type of abuse in Manitowoc is neglect, mostly due to drug problems. There were 3 drug busts in the last week in Manitowoc. There are problems with the parents being under the influence and usually the home conditions are not safe with large numbers of needles, drugs and other items being present. Children are testing positive for drugs either through touching them or inhaling substances. We have been working with police to get the children off on the side when doing drug busts so they don't see everything going on. We have also been using the Lakeshore Child Advocacy Center to forensically interview children which is a much more child friendly atmosphere.

FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL REPORTS THROUGH FEBRUARY, 2021 – Patricia Dodge:

We have had an increase in out of home placements for children and project that we will be overspent about \$98,000 by year end. The Department of Children and Families Basic County Allocation increased a bit in 2021 so that helps.

On the Workload Statistics sheet we are changing the CCS category to show all the open cases that month, not just the new ones that opened that month. We have a waitlist for kids for CCS program.

The moratorium for utility shut offs ends April 15. This will possibly result in an increased demand for applicants that haven't applied yet or those that have past due bills and receive a disconnect notice. We continue to try to be proactive and do outreach to those individuals. Pandemic FoodShare benefits are being issued for families that are eligible for the free or reduced school lunches for the 20/21 school year. The ES staff answer questions regarding this program. Also open enrollment for healthcare in the MarketPlace has again been extended to August 15.

QUESTIONS AND INPUT FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON THE STATUS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

There was a question regarding a recent police raid, there were 3 kids in the home, where do the kids go?

They would try and place them with relatives first if they are available and pass a background check, if not available would go to a respite home.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT OF AGENCY OPERATIONS – Patricia Dodge:

Secretary Emilie Amundson attended the Regional Department Directors Group meeting (17 counties are involved). We discussed collaborating with other counties to develop a regional group home or residential home to keep kids with higher needs in the community, rather than having to send them outside of the region or state. She agreed to work with the counties and will start a work group. We also asked DCF to allow more flexibility for the Families First funds, the rules are very rigid to get approvals, and she was open to that.

March is National Social Work Month, April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, Counseling Awareness Month and Economic Support Specialist Recognition and May is Mental Health Awareness Month and National Drug Court Month. We have printed flyers to put around the building in recognition. We normally had a lunch in March but we had moved to a Virtual Appreciation Week in Fall last year. We will also do some sort of appreciation event in the fall this year.

Staffing: We have filled 1 AODA Case Manager Position and the after-hours Crisis Worker and have one AODA Case Manager starting April 19th. The CCS Facilitator and Clinical Case Manager candidates both turned down the positions. We are still looking for 2 CCS Facilitators, 1 AODA Counselor, 1 CCS Supervisor and an LTE for the CFS Unit. We currently have 48 kids on a wait-list for CCS services.

Date of next meeting:

The next regular meeting of the Human Services Department Board will be held on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 4:45 p.m. The meeting will be held in the 8th Street building at 801 Jay Street. Access will also be available remotely by Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BAUMANN, SECONDED BY CAVANAUGH TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT BOARD AT 5:17 P.M.
MOTION CARRIED.